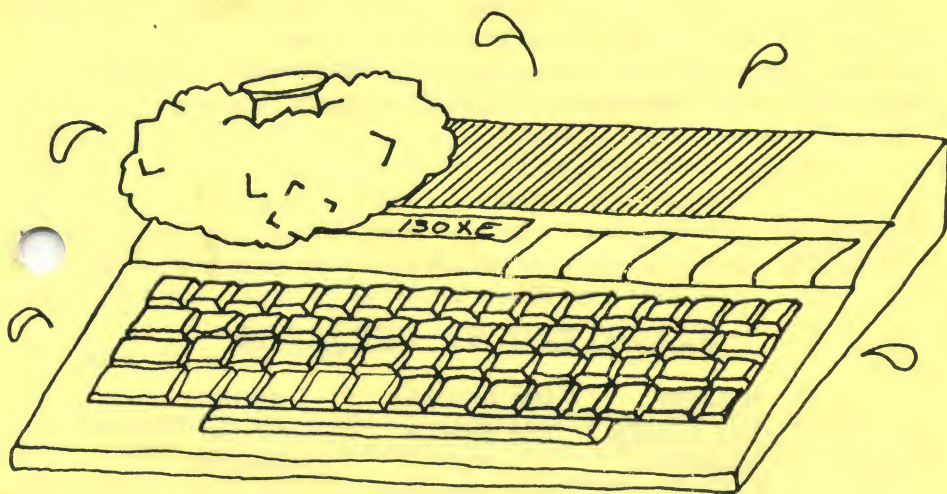


# status

N E W S L E T T E R

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 5

MAY • 1985



**130XE (too hot?)**  
**DOS 2.5...**

*Dos 2.5  
Centered Text*

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## Editor's File

Well, for those of you that missed it, the Va./Carolinas Computer Show was a big success for STATUS . We picked up around a dozen new members and made a pretty good show of our computer expertise... most people seemed to be impressed with the demos (e.g. the ATARI "robot/spaceship", "slideshow", etc.). For some strange reason we were parked next to the "Commode Door" group, and to be quite humble, we knocked their socks off! Thanks to everyone who helped to make this event possible and to CO-BRA Computers and Software City for providing the monitors...

In this issue Doug Boynton gives us his first impressions of his newly purchased 130XE...he bought it mail order, so don't all run down to "Toys-R-Us" demanding that they show you one.

Perhaps you've been noticing the recent trends in this newsletter... yes, they've been getting thicker and flashier... but they're also being written by the SAME people! I don't know how the members-at-large feel, but I personally am not impressed by a club of almost 200 members that can only field a handful of contributors...and this month brings the situation to an ugly head: due to the thoughtlessness of a few individuals who promised submissions (had space reserved for them) and then didn't produce, I was forced to resort to something NO editor likes resort to... reprints from sources outside the group.

Again, I'm not impressed.

This month I'd like to hand out a few awards to some deserving computer icons...COMPANY MOST LIKELY TO BECOME A MAJOR ATARI SUPPLIER: ELECTRONIC ARTS...if they ever come out with ATARI versions of their software. BUSIEST STATUS BEAVER: BUCK MADDREY...cruise director on the STATUS-BOAT, and all around computer show ringmaster. MOST FRUSTRATING GAME: BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK...no game should be this har-zzzzzzzt! And finally, LEAST USED KEYBOARD KEY: THE "HELP" BUTTON...have you ever been helped by it?

# DOS 2.5 To The Rescue

(c) 1985 ANTIC Publishing Inc.

By Eric Clausen

Special to ANTIC

This long awaited product, successor to Atari DOS 2.0 will be the new "official" Atari DOS. It was written by the same group of people (headed by Bill Wilkinson of Optimized Systems Software) who are responsible for Atari BASIC, DOS 2.0, BASIC A+, BASIC XL, DOS XL, ACTION! and other top-ranked Atari products.

DOS 2.5 supports both single density and the enhanced (dual) density mode on the Atari 1050 disk drive. If you format a disk in your 1050 drive with this DOS, you'll find that you now have 1010 sectors (129K) of available disk storage instead of the familiar 707... this represents a 43% increase in storage capacity over DOS 2.0! DOS 2.5 maintains the use of 128 byte sectors but increases the number of sectors per track from 18 to 26.

Most importantly, DOS 2.5 maintains file compatibility with 2.0. Thus, if you have a 1050 drive, you can boot up 2.5, format a disk, directly copy your 2.0 files onto the disk and have considerably more room left over. All this with no hardware modifications to the disk drive.

Otherwise, this new DOS looks and acts exactly like DOS 2.0. The menu will be reassuringly familiar as there has been only one addition: option [P] on the 2.5 menu will allow 1050 disk drive owners to force a true single density format instead of the default enhanced density.

Those of you with 810 drives need not despair, this DOS is for you too. Although you will not be able to take advantage of the enhanced density feature, you can boot DOS 2.5 disks that were formatted and written in enhanced density on 1050 drives. The way that 2.5 handles this is to "hide" files from the 810 drive that cross over the normal 720 sector barrier, which is normally the last 2.0 sector. If you completely fill a DOS 2.5 disk (1010 sectors) on a 1050 and then check the disk directory at some point you will see files listed like this:

```
FILE1.BAS 025  
<FILE2.BAS 025
```

This tells you that FILE1.BAS is entirely contained within the lower 720 sectors and can therefore be accessed by an 810 drive. The files marked with the "< >" characters around them are not accessible with an 810 drive because they "hidden". The directory will show a formatted disk to have "999+ FREE SECTORS"... you really have 1010.

Other changes include:

\* Option [J] - Duplicate Disk - now formats the destination disk before copying.

\* DOS 2.5 will allow 64K of memory in the new 128K 130XE computer to be used as a ramdisk.

\* A file conversion utility to convert Atari DOS 3.0 files to the 2.5 format.

\* A utility to create autoboot BASIC programs.

\* An un-erase capability to retrieve accidentally erased files.

\* The ability to turn the write verify on or off and change the number of disk buffers, without resorting to POKes.

\* The ability to test for bad sectors... whole disk only.

NOTE: all but the "Option J" feature listed above are not accessed through the menu, but are included on the 2.5 disk as binary load files.

One thing that concerns me, as a user, is the lack of a disk utility program enhanced density disks. In some preliminary checks, I've found that DiskWiz 2 will read all enhanced density sectors out to 1023 (the difference between 1023 and 1010 is taken up by the boot and directory sectors where the program data is not stored). It won't, however, trace or map sectors that run out past sector 720.

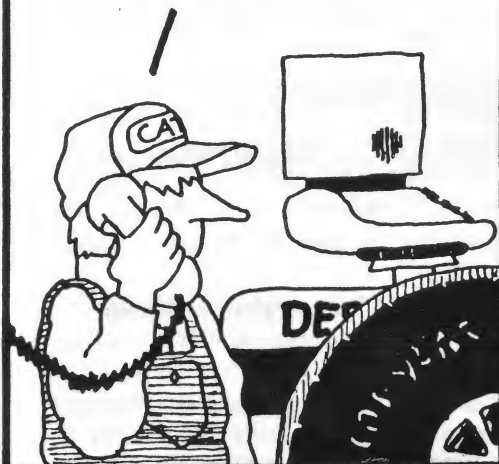
I hope some company or individual will soon produce a full-featured disk utility compatible with this highly impressive new DOS.

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# Hooter Purvls: Boy Compter Whlz

ATARI HELP LINE? I'VE  
GOT MY COMPUTER  
HOOKED UP TO MY  
JOHN DEERE OUT HERE  
IN MY CORN FIELD...



...AND I KEEP GETTIN'  
A **3333** ERROR! I'VE  
NEVER EVEN **HEARD**  
OF THAT ONE !!!



LET'S SEE... 3333... 3333  
AH! HERE IT IS, ERROR  
3333...



STUPID  
USAGE  
ERROR...





# STATUS Minutes

April 1985

President Gene Rodriguez opened the meeting by welcoming the members and visitors. He followed up with the latest news from Atari Corp. and other hardware and software suppliers. Many independent vendors are dumping old hardware and software at very low prices. The new Atari computers are receiving very good comments in the media.

Atari Corp. is sending STATUS a promotional kit to help with our demonstration at the Pavilion. This package will consist of a banner, literature and passout items. Sorry folks, no ST's this show.

Starting with the next meeting, individual group sessions will be held to familiarize members with subjects of interest. Sessions on Atari DOS and modems will be among the first planned.

Optimized Systems Software (OSS) is starting up a 24 hour BBS. The number will be made available soon.

Buck Maddrey (Activities Director) introduced Dwane Cochenour of "CO-BRA Computer Center". Dwane announced the availability of a new joy stick on the market. This is a new item and carries a one year warranty. Jerome Ruben of "I/O Computer" presented the latest information on the products and services available from his store.

Buck elaborated on a news release from MPP on their new communications software. Version 6 offers many improvements and is said to work with Compuserve protocol. MPP owners with earlier software may exchange or purchase the new revision at reduced cost.

Buck is working on a welcome package for new members. This packet will contain info on STATUS and other valuable information for the new Atari user.

Skip Poole presented a demonstration of Writer's Tool by OSS.

Update April 18, 1985

A motion was presented by John Whitehurst to have STATUS make a volume purchase of cassette software being offered at very low prices. The motion was seconded and passed. J.C. Petty (Treasurer) will be handling this project.

A motion to provide the STATUS BBS Sysop with a copy of the club library was presented by Jim Russell, but after considerable discussion, the motion was withdrawn.

The highlight of the evening was the celebration of STATUS's fourth birthday. Cake and soft drinks were served to all. Happy Birthday STATUS.

# Centered Text

By Bob Page

In the September '84 issue of the STATUS newsletter, some one raised the question, "How do you center text in the text window?" I felt the answer that was given was somewhat limited in its use. So here goes my attempt to explain what I feel is a more powerful method.

Simply "padding" a print statement with spaces is a simple solution

```
example: 10 GR.1
          20 ? "          center"
```

but you'll run into a problem if you need to print multiple lines or say, update a score.

```
Try: 5 GR. 1
      10 A=10:B=20:C=30
      20 ? "          score=";A
      30 ? "          score=";B
      40 ? "          score=";C
      100 GOTO 100:REM Just a loop
```

If you kept printing scores they would eventually scroll off the text window. Now you may say, "Wouldn't it be nice to be able to POSITION text on the screen as in GRAPHICS 0?". Well, that's close to what you can do with only a couple of POKES.

If you check your favorite Atari OS reference (mine is "Mapping the Atari"-Ian Chadwick/Compute!) You will find two very interesting locations-\$290 and \$291 (or 656 and 657 decimal). 656 contains the present text window cursor row value. This value will be 0-3 because of the text windows 4 row limit. 657 contains the present text window cursor column value (0-39). Now, just prior to printing, if you simply POKE the X,Y value of the position you wish to print to in the text window, (X in 657 and Y in 656) you will have total control over the text window.

```
Sample: 10 GR. 2: ? #6;"Print 'Here' Sample"
        20 REM Print on second line, 12 columns
          in
        30 ROW=1:COL=11
        40 POKE 656,ROW:POKE 657,COL
        50 ? "HERE"
        100 GOTO 100
```



Now don't forget that row 0 is the first "real" row (not row 1) and column 0 the first real column (and not column 1). Also, you will have to "re"-POKE 656 and 657 in order to print again to anything other than location 0,0. A subroutine would be ideal if your program does a lot of text window printing.

Finally, here's a sample routine that centers text in the text window:

```
10 GR. 1: ? #6; "Text Window Centered"
20 DIM TEXT$(14)
30 TEXT$="I am Centered!"
40 ROWCENTER=18
50 CENTER=ROWCENTER-(LEN(TEXT$)/2)
60 POKE 656,1:POKE 657,CENTER
70 ? " ";TEXT$
100 GOTO 100
```

You probably noticed that I have the row center set at 18 instead of what you may have assumed should be 20 (40 characters/2). Don't forget the Atari 2 character indentation default, which will offset you by 2 spaces.

Thanks for allowing me the privilege to share this info and may your future programming be full of many happy digits!

## The Atari 130XE

By Doug Boynton

You can tell you're an old-timer in this racket if you can remember when Computerland used to sell Ataris. I can remember that. In fact, I bought my first Atari "way back" in '83 from a place that now sells only IBM and COMPAQ. They don't like to be reminded of things like that.

Unfortunately, if computing is a low-budget hobby, and not your business, you're getting used to places like "Toys R Us" by now. The advice (too rich for my blood, anyway) has long gone.

Those of you who know me well know how I feel about mail-ordering merchandise. I hung around the local retailers for weeks...waiting for the much-talked-about 130XE. The young woman who managed a local "Games and Gadgets" outlet told me they'd arrive "when our warehouse ships them to us". What I'm leading up to is this: a short time later, a brown truck arrived, bearing my (and possibly your) new computer. I have some thoughts on where the local retailers can stock those computers when they come in, but that's another story...

Oh Yeah, the computer. It's small. About 14 inches long, nine wide, and shade over two inches tall. It weighs in at about three pounds, and has "Made in Taiwan" stamped all over it. It's a far cry from the "Made in USA" metal-encased behemoth I'm used to.

The keyboard has a good feel, although it'll take some getting used to. The keys are sculpted like IBM keys, and have a slightly stiff feel. They're also slippery...made out of pebble-grained plastic. I care about this stuff because I write a lot.

The rear of the machine has the usual complement of ports, switches, and selectors. That includes a (rather flimsy) cartridge port, and another port billed as the "Enhanced Cartridge Interface". The manual says that's where items like hard-drives will hook up.

Speaking of the manual, it's substantial, and quite good. It includes information on how to access the extra 64K of memory (more later), and a good intro to ATARI BASIC commands for those unfamiliar with them.

Let's get to the scoresheet. On the plus side, it's compatible with 800XL software. On the minus side, it IS an 800XL for all intents and purposes, until DOS 2.5 or some software for it is marketed. DOS 2.5 will alledgedly turn that extra memory into a disk emulator (about 2/3 of a single-density disk in memory

On the plus side, it's just about the most computer you can find on the market for under \$200...or under \$500, for that matter. On the minus side, no new peripherals are out yet (at least none I've found east of the Mississippi!). The manual speaks of new printers and modems, but talks of "hooking your 1050 drive..." to the machine. No new software is out, either...despite pretty pictures of sample packages on the box.

On the plus side, is the fact that it does have an expansion port. That means (hopefully) there will be at least some third-party goodies for it. Haven't we all gotten tired of the "coming soon" announcements from the old and new Atari folks? On the minus side, it looks cheaply-made. As I said, it's not hard to tell it's "Made in Taiwan".

On the plus side, despite its cheap look, it is sleek, light, and small. You can easily scale down the size of your workspace. On the minus side, I wonder how sturdy that cartridge slot is in the rear.

You should know, if you don't already, that the 128K is not all available for BASIC programs. The extra 64K takes a bit of programming expertise to access. It involves switching 16K banks of memory in and out of the CPU's way. There is good documentation for the programmers among us on how to access that extra memory, but until some software comes along, memory size is really the same as the 800XL.

I for one have been frothing at the mouth since January. If you haven't been frothing yet, hold on to your money for a while. The prices will come down, and there'll be some software to DO something with it. Until then, it's just an expensive 800XL.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: On a somber note, Doug had to return his 130XE due to overheating problems with the ROM... hopefully the problem was isolated to his unit and not system wide... more news as the situation develops.]

## Telecomputing

By Doug Boynton

Whew! Terminal programs...where do I start? There are so many of them...public domain, commercial, write 'em yourself...the list goes on.

So...the first thing to ask yourself is how you would like to use your modem. Is it for recreation...to gather "free" programs from Bulletin Boards, is it to access a mainframe computer at work or school, to trade programs with friends; or to communicate with a large commercial data base, like CompuServe? A lot of questions to answer...and you just bought the thing, right?

First, let's tackle Bulletin Boards. Most BBS systems (that's redundant, I know) use some flavor of the AMIS public domain program (including the Rickey Moose), and some terminal that includes XMODEM protocol is a must. If you're not familiar with XMODEM, I'd refer you to an earlier column [STATUS Vol.4, Issue 1]. For this reason, search out one of the AMODEM or RMODEM p/d programs. They're in the club's library, or send me a disk and return postage, and I'll be happy to copy 'em off for you. AMODEM works with all modems that connect with the 850 interface; RMODEM is the p/d terminal of choice for 1030 users. They're cheap, they work. What more could you ask for?

For communicating with a mainframe, I'd suggest the older JTERM or a commercial program like TELETARI if you have an 850. The old CHAMELEON CRT EMULATOR from APX (now through Antic, I believe) is nice, but a bit cumbersome to use. A better choice among emulators is the VT-10-SQUARED program. It's public domain, and emulates the popular DEC VT-100 terminal. It also generates an 80-column screen. Use it on a monochrome monitor though, as it's a bit fuzzy in color. The VT-10 program is also available for the 1030 and MPP modems.

Trading programs with friends? Use the AMODEM/RMODEM programs. Calling CompuServe? The TSCOPE program emulates a CIS-approved terminal, and performs just about all functions admirably at little or no cost.

I've avoided mentioning probably the most talked-about terminal program on the market recently: HOMETERM, part of the HOMEPAK from Batteries Included. It's a fine program, according to those who swear by it. Others (especially novice telecommunicators) swear AT it constantly. It does seem to be a well-thought-out program, but there is one problem...the documentation stinks. Even those who sing its praises admit that. It supports XMODEM transfers, and communicates well with CompuServe. It was written by Russ Wetmore, a well-known Atari programmer, and CompuServe Information Service Sysop on the CIS Atari Sig. Help from him on sorting out this program cost \$6.00+ per hour.

I won't say avoid it...it IS a good, all-purpose terminal program. But be prepared for many frustrating moments with it. Get the p/d modification package for it, and read Henry Colonna's lengthy explanations on how to make the most of it.

Telecommunicating is fun (or should be)...but like so many other things, there are right tools for each job.

NEXT TIME: MAILBAG!



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# Video Game WordSearch

By Stan Harrison III

G H E D S A U I O P J H V B N C X Z  
I H B D F E R W S Z X O P K M K J G  
R E D I R M A E B N A N O C C O P E  
N H L S R E T S U B T S O H G B C S  
A T L H G F T Y U I O H C S D F C B  
M L A B H I O B C X V T R D S L H E  
C A B R U C E L E E E G H U I Y D S  
A E M V B H G T Y U I S D C X Z A W  
P T U D I A R R E V I R N J H G F I  
O S G U D G I D B M O T T S O L D G  
N O X X A Z Z A X X I U Y G B H G F  
H C V F R T X X S D E F J K L O P Y  
P O T S T I P F F I L C H T A E H H  
H J I U Y T F D S A Z X G H Y F W Q  
T S E U Q S A L L A D J U F D D S A  
D E C A T H A L O N B F D D F G E W  
G H Y T S E M A G R E M M U S S F S  
B H U I Y H S A D R E D L U O B B S  
N O I T I S O P E L O P G H U Y E D  
G H U Y T E L T T U H S E C A P S G  
G H U Y T F F V B J D S F T I O P Y  
V G F H S R E P A K E N O T S Y E K

- 
- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. BEAMRIDER       | 11. DECATHALON   |
| 2. GHOSTBUSTERS    | 12. RIVER RAID   |
| 3. KEYSTONE KAPERS | 13. GUMBALL      |
| 4. SPACE SHUTTLE   | 14. STEALTH      |
| 5. BRUCE LEE       | 15. CONAN        |
| 6. DALLAS QUEST    | 16. DIG DUG      |
| 7. HEATHCLIFF      | 17. LOST TOMB    |
| 8. PAC MAN         | 18. ZAXXON       |
| 9. POLE POSITION   | 19. PITSTOP      |
| 10. SUMMER GAMES   | 20. BOULDER DASH |

## \* President's Column \*

The Virginia/Carolinas Computer Show was a big success for STATUS we added new members to our ranks and sold a few folks on Atari Computers. My Thanks to Buck Maddrey and his group of volunteers namely: Doug Boynton, Joe Bleicher, Henry Colonna, Mike Duckker, Nip Harrison, Joe Hootman, Randy Holmes, Ron Johnson, Dick Litchfield, J. C. Petty, Skip Poole, Gene Rodriguez III, Bob Roetker, Mike Tefft, Don Pemberton for his art work on our STATUS Info Board, and a special thanks to Dwane Cochenour from Co-Bra Computer Center, and Jim from Software City these two gents allowed us to use a couple of their store monitors. The Atari User Support Coordinator Dave Duberman for providing us on such short notice with some promotional trinkets, they came in handy, and it shows someone cares over at Sunnyvale.

Doug Boynton provided us and quite a few folks with the first real live touch, feel, etc.. of the new ATARI 130XE, we think it was the only one in the Tidewater area, under the stress of all the onlookers the 130XE got a little stage fright and began to hang up (we think it was the heat buildup) Doug has a short first impression review which is included in this Newsletter, he also has downloaded the DOS 2.5 from Compuserve, and it is available for downloading from the STATUS BBS. In the booth next to ours was the local Commodore User's Group who seem to be impressed by our professional appearance, and popularity.

During our last meeting we celebrated our 4th birthday, a birthday party with cake and soft drinks which was provided by Nip Harrison. Being there with over 60 people present reminded me of a night four years ago when there were only 8 people with lots of ideas on what we should name the group, the name Southside Tidewater Atari Technical User's Society was picked, and since then it has been better known as STATUS of Tidewater....Until next time keep on Hacking.....



## S.T.A.T.U.S.

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MEETINGS: S.T.A.T.U.S. meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of each month at the Baylake Pines Private School, 2204 Treasure Island Dr., in Virginia Beach. at 6:30 p.m. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

### NEWSLETTER ARTICLES:

Submitted articles are preferred on disk text files, but will be gratefully accepted on hard copy (including handwriting) if you do not have a disc drive. If you have a modem, you can upload your articles to the Editor by calling 499-6021. Articles may be submitted anytime, but will probably not make that month's newsletter if submitted less than one week before the regular meeting date.

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